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# NONPOINT SOURCE NEWS

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Volume 1, Issue 1

September 2002

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## Welcome to the NPS Unit

In 1999 the Nonpoint Source Unit at the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board was formed to address with the nonpoint source issues in the Los Angeles and Ventura counties areas. The multidisciplinary unit deals with a wide variety of topics and issues. We primarily focus on issues within the six categories outlined in the CA NPS Pollution Control Program Plan authored by the State Water Resources Control Board and the CA Coastal Commission. As outlined in the plan. The six NPS categories are agriculture, forestry, urban areas, marina and recreational boating, hydromodification, and wetland/riparian areas.

## NPS Pollution in the Los Angeles Area

The Los Angeles area is the States most densely populated and industrialized region characterized by a mix of urban development and intensified agriculture. NPS pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairments in CA and nationwide. Unlike pollution from a distinct source, such as a discharge pipe, NPS pollution comes from many diffuse sources and occurs sporadically when rainfall, snowmelt, wind or irrigation water moves over and through the ground. In the LA area, nonpoint source pollution comes primarily from urban runoff, intensified agricultural practices, home septic systems, hydromodifications, and Marinas/boating activities.

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## NEXT ISSUE...

❖	Hot Topics: Agricultural Waivers, Septics & more
❖	Find out which Prop 13 Applicants were selected
❖	More NPS pollution prevention tips!

## 401 Certification and You

Are you retrofitting a bridge? Constructing a residential development? Putting in a crossing? If so, your project may have to be certified under section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

## Details of the Certification

Under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act a State certification is required for any applicant for a Federal license or permit to conduct any activity may result in any discharge into waters of the United States. In the case of 401s, the Federal agency is typically the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The corps has jurisdiction, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, to issue permits for discharges of dredged or fill material.



*Water fowl in a wetland at McGrath Park*

What does this all mean? If your project is going to have any temporary or permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters the project needs to be certified by the appropriate regional board. Jurisdictional waters include but are not limited to the following lakes, rivers, wetlands, sloughs, and natural ponds. States and tribes can make their decisions to deny, certify or condition permits or licenses by ensuring the activity will comply with State water quality standards. Water quality standards have 3 primary components: designated uses, criteria to protect those uses and an antidegradation policy. States designate uses based on the

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The NPS unit follows the Regional Board's, Three-Tiered approach in dealing with NPS pollution, relying heavily on Tier 1: Self Determined Implementation. We also utilize Tier 2: Regulatory-based encouragement, by funding NPS implementation projects through Prop 13 and 319(h)/205(j) grants. In the future we anticipate a stronger focus on Tier 3: Effluent Limitations and Enforcement, for many nonpoint source issues such as agriculture runoff, ballast water management, mining and sluicing activities that are unable to meet designated water quality standards. The unit is actively involved in education outreach activities throughout both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

### **Prop 13 Funding is here again**

In March 2000, California Voters approved Proposition 13 (Costa –Machado Act of 2000), which authorizes the State of California to sell \$1.97 billion in general obligation bonds to support safe drinking, water quality, flood protection and waste reliability projects through out the state. General obligation bonds are backed by the state, meaning that the state is required to pay the principal and interest costs on these bonds.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has been designated to help allocate \$763.9 million of these funds to local projects throughout California. During Fiscal Year 00-01 we approved funding for 11 proposals worth \$3.8 million dollars.

The Board announced the availability of \$82 million for water quality/watershed grants for the 2001-02 fiscal year. This years grants application process was divided into two steps that were intended to make the application process easier and improve the quality of projects. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board received 105 concept pre-proposals and 54 applicants were asked to submit a full proposal for their project.

The deadline to submit full proposals was June 7, 2002. The next step involves an in house review of all the submitted proposals. Selected proposals will go before the State Board for formal adoption in October. Applicants will be notified by early November on the status of their proposals. For more information you may contact Nancy Ngugi at (213) 576-6789 or visit the state board website at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/prop13/index.html>

## **NPS POLLUTION PREVENTION TIPS**



- ♦ Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves and debris out of street gutters and storm water.
- ♦ Pick up after your pet! Vehicle tires, rain, runoff and other means track pet wastes and assists its most probable fate into ocean waters at the beach. Street sweepers do not have the capability of cleaning up after pet wastes.
- ♦ Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease, and antifreeze. Do not hose them into the street. Maintain your car regularly.
- ♦ Deep watering with less frequency is more beneficial to plant root development. If runoff occurs in the process, limit times to shorter duration and more days. For shrubs and trees, creation of a soil well around the base of the plant will trap water.
- ♦ Mulching soil with compost will add moisture-holding capacity and decrease the need for potentially polluting fertilizers. Apply garden chemicals according to directions. Do not over apply.
- ♦ Avoid paving areas not used for vehicular or pedestrian traffic. This allows water to penetrate soil, causing less run off.
- ♦ Landscape with native drought-tolerant plants. They reduce the need for water, pesticides, and fertilizers.
- ♦ Don't rinse or leaf blow your sidewalks and driveways. Rake and sweep instead! This saves money and prevents contaminants from reaching the ocean.

For a complete list of ways you can help reduce NPS pollution visit the EPAs website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont.html>

## ACTIVITIES IN YOUR WATERSHED

During the month and at various locations throughout the Southland many local environmental organizations hold meetings and volunteer opportunities regarding water issues specific to their watershed. Below are just a few of them. A more detailed list of watershed groups will be available on our web site shortly.



### ➤ LOS ANGELES AND SAN GABRIEL RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL MEETS ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH TO CONTINUE WORK ON THE WATERSHED MASTER PLAN. FOR MORE INFORMATION YOU MAY VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT [WWW.LASGRWC.ORG](http://WWW.LASGRWC.ORG)

**PLACE:** COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS  
900 S. FREMONT, ALHAMBRA, CA

### ➤ FRIENDS OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER

FRIENDS OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN 1986 TO PROTECT AND RESTORE THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC HERITAGE OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER AND ITS RIPARIAN HABITAT THROUGH INCLUSIVE PLANNING, EDUCATION AND WISE STEWARDSHIP. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF FoLAR'S EVENTS VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT [WWW.FOLAR.ORG](http://WWW.FOLAR.ORG)

### Rio Hondo Tour

REINTRODUCING THE RIO HONDO TOUR BOSQUE DEL RIO HONDO NATURE PARK. MEET @ BOSQUE DEL RIO PARK ON SAN GABRIEL BLVD, WEST OF ROSEMEAD BLVD. NEAR THE CITY OF ROSEMEAD SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, AT 3:30 PM.

### Adopt-A-Wetland

WETLANDS NEED YOU! YOUR GROUP/ORGANIZATION CAN SIGN UP TO HELP. DUE TO THE EXTREMELY DELICATE ECOSYSTEM OF A WETLAND VOLUNTEERS ARE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN A ONE TIME TRAINING PROGRAM. TRAINING SESSIONS WILL BE HELD OCTOBER 12 AND NOVEMBER 16, 2002 FROM 9-11. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT (323) 441-8634.

## \* CONGRATULATIONS \*



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE VENTURA COAST KEEPER ON THEIR RECENT PURCHASE OF THE ORMOND BEACH WETLANDS. FOR DETAILS CALL (805) 382-4540.

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functions and values of the water body. States can also adopt narrative and numerical standards.

The first step towards obtaining certification involves properly submitting an application to the Regional Board along with a \$500.00 deposit. Applications can be downloaded from the regional board website in Adobe Acrobat and Word at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/~rwqcb4/html/meetings/401wqc.html> The total fees for issuing standard certification is \$500.00. Total fees for conditional certifications are based on total impacted areas. The fee schedule is also available on our website. The Regional Board then has 30 days in which to do a preliminary review. Once an application has been deemed complete, the Board then has at least 60 days in which to make a decision. The Board is also required to have a minimum 21-day public comment period before any action is taken on a 401.

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### *Section 401 certification allows States to take a more active role in wetland protection*

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Applications are typically submitted concurrently with submittals to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and the California Department of Fish and Game. A 401 certification is required before a 404 permit (from the USACOE) or authorization can be issued, therefore, it is in the Applicants best interest to submit a complete application as soon as possible. Applicants are also urged to submit a 401 application concurrently with 404 applications and to hold joint meetings with all resource agencies.

### 401 Certification and Their Role in Wetland Protection

In 1998, the National Wetlands Policy Forum recommended that States "make a more aggressive use of their certification authorities under Section 401 of the CWA to protect wetlands from chemical and other types of alterations". Over the past several years, States have responded by applying Section 401 certification to wetlands. Section 401 allows states to address associated chemical, physical and biological impacts such as low dissolved oxygen levels, turbidity, filling of habitat, and impacts on fish mitigation as a result of habitat alterations. Water quality standards in conjunction with antidegradation policies can provide the basis for section 401 certification decisions when dealing with wetlands.



For specific questions regarding the 401 application process and program please contact Jason Lambert at (213) 576-5733 or Valerie Carrillo at (213) 576-6759



## CONTACT INFORMATION

This newsletter was produced by the Nonpoint Source Unit of the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board. If you have any question regarding this publication or any nonpoint source pollution related question you may contact us at the following phone numbers.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## We Want To Hear From You

Have an event you would like advertised? Have a nonpoint source question? Have a good idea for an article for an upcoming issue? If you do...let is know! We are always interested in hearing from our stakeholders. If you do, contact Macaria Flores. In addition if you would like to be place on our subscription list contact us at [maflores@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:maflores@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov) . ❖

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